



Reminders for Regional Organizers

Regional organizers (RO) play a critical role in a breeding bird atlas project. Without regional organizers, a large volunteer-based project such as an atlas would simply be impossible.

The primary task of each RO is to maintain frequent communication with volunteers working atlas blocks. A secondary task is to answer questions and provide quality control over the data collected. Below are a few reminders that will give you additional guidance on how to work effectively as a regional organizer.

1. If possible, make your first contact with each atlas volunteer by telephone, rather than by e-mail. E-mail may be efficient and later the most often used form of communication for some volunteers, but start with a phone call. A telephone call provides a personal touch sometimes lost in e-mail.
2. Ask each volunteer about e-mail. Many folks have e-mail, but some use it more than others. Avoid using e-mail with volunteers that are more comfortable with telephone conversations.
3. Communicate approximately twice each month between mid-May and Mid-August. This frequencies of communication should help you keep informed on the progress within each block, and will help give each volunteer a feeling of being valuable and involved.
4. Ask all volunteers to call you immediately if they find a breeding bird not on their field observation card. If possible verify such reported species. An RO does not need to do the verification, but help find someone who will.
5. If at any time a volunteer is feeling like backing out of the project, let them know that a block doesn't need to be completed in one year. Some folks will take two or even three years to complete a block. Volunteers need to feel that their involvement at any level is helpful—even when their person schedules get unexpectedly busy.
6. Remind folks that field cards need to be turned in by September 15—or earlier—even if the block is not complete. It's good to remind volunteers of this in early August.
7. Field observations and relative abundance cards should be turned into the RO for review. The RO is responsible to see that all the data is on the field cards. It especially important that volunteers record the time they spent in a block and the mileage. This information can be used as an in-kind match in fundraising efforts. When the review of field cards is completed, forward these data to atlas coordinator.
8. Keep track of the cost of your long distance phone calls, if any. The cost can be clamed on your income tax return as a contribution to the New Mexico Breeding Bird Atlas Project, which is a non-profit corporation. This cost should also be reported to the atlas coordinated because it can also be used as an in-kind match in fundraising efforts.